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INFO LOG-00 ARA-01 OASY-00 DS-00 TEDE-00 ADS-00 SS-00  
DSCC-00 /007W

-----E43E44 171823Z /38

R 171822Z AUG 95  
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7514

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BUENOS AIRES 005073

E.O. 12356: DECL:08/16/05  
TAGS: PTER, PGOV, OREP, AR  
SUBJECT: STAFFDEL MACKEY VISIT: JEWISH COMMUNITY VIEWS  
ON THE AMIA BOMBING

REF: (A) STATE 192383, (B) BUENOS AIRES 4821

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT

2. SUMMARY: STAFFDEL MACKEY, UNDERTAKING PREPARATORY  
WORK FOR A SEPTEMBER 28 HOUSE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS  
COMMITTEE HEARING ON TERRORISM IN LATIN AMERICA,  
DISCUSSED THE AMIA BOMBING WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
JEWISH COMMUNITY, GOA OFFICIALS, AND THE INVESTIGATIVE  
JUDGE, JUAN JOSE GALEANO. WHILE GIVING GALEANO AND  
HIS TEAM AN "A" FOR EFFORT, JEWISH COMMUNITY LEADERS  
ARE FRUSTRATED BY THE LACK OF PROGRESS IN THE  
INVESTIGATION; THEY BLAME THE FOOTDRAGGING ON THE  
GOA'S FEAR OF ANGERING IRAN AND CORRUPT AND PERHAPS

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ANTI-SEMITIC ELEMENTS IN THE BUENOS AIRES PROVINCIAL POLICE AND OTHER SECURITY FORCES. SEPTTEL WILL COVER MEETINGS WITH GALEANO AND GOA OFFICIALS. END SUMMARY.

3. HOUSE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE (HIRC) STAFFERS JOHN MACKEY, ROGER NORIEGA, AND DANIEL RESTREPO VISITED BUENOS AIRES, AUG. 13-16 TO DEVELOP BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR A SEPTEMBER 28 COMMITTEE HEARING ON TERRORISM IN LATIN AMERICA IN. A MAJOR FOCUS OF THE HEARING WILL BE ON THE BOMBINGS OF THE JEWISH-ARGENTINE MUTUAL ASSOCIATION (AMIA) IN 1994 AND THE ISRAELI EMBASSY IN 1992. THE HEARING WOULD BE A FOLLOW-UP TO ONE HELD IN AUGUST 1994. THE HIRC MAY INVITE ONE OR MORE SPOKESPERSONS FROM THE JEWISH COMMUNITY TO PRESENT THEIR VIEWS ON THE BOMBING AND THE STATUS OF THE GOA INVESTIGATION. RUBEN BERAJA, PRESIDENT OF THE DELEGATION OF JEWISH ARGENTINE ASSOCIATIONS (DAIA), IS THE MOST LIKELY WITNESS. THE JEWISH LEADERS THAT STAFFDEL MET WERE UNANIMOUS IN THEIR VIEW THAT THE HEARING WOULD BE A POSITIVE STIMULUS TO SPUR WHAT MANY SEE AS AN UNPRODUCTIVE INVESTIGATION.

4. IN ADDITION TO BERAJA, THE STAFFDEL INTERVIEWED AMIA PRESIDENT ALBERTO CRUPNICOFF AND RELATIVES OF THREE AMIA BOMBING VICTIMS, [REDACTED]

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BERAJA  
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5. IN HIS CONVERSATION WITH THE STAFFDEL, BERAJA, WHO TESTIFIED AT THE HFAC HEARING LAST YEAR, ESSENTIALLY REITERATED HIS COMMENTS MADE TO AMBASSADOR WILCOX EARLIER THIS MONTH (REF B). BERAJA BELIEVES JUDGE GALEANO IS DOING THE BEST JOB HE CAN UNDER DIFFICULT AND LIMITING CIRCUMSTANCES. BERAJA'S MAIN POINTS:

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-- FEAR OF ANOTHER ATTACK: NERVOUS ABOUT PROVOKING A THIRD TERRORIST ATTACK IF THE CURRENT INVESTIGATION GETS TOO HOT, THE FOREIGN MINISTRY HAS WEIGHED IN TO SLOW DOWN THE INVESTIGATION. BERAJA BASES THIS BELIEF ON CONVERSATIONS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER DI TELLA WHO, WITHOUT SAYING SO DIRECTLY, INTIMATED TO BERAJA THAT THE GOA MUST BE CAUTIOUS IN ACCUSING OTHER GOVERNMENTS. HE ALSO SAID THAT A SENIOR ARGENTINE DIPLOMAT TOLD HIM HE REFUSED A FOREIGN MINISTRY REQUEST THAT HE PURSUE AN INFORMAL MODUS VIVENDI WITH THE IRANIANS (WE EASE UP ON THE INVESTIGATION; YOU HOLD YOUR TERRORISTS IN CHECK). BERAJA IMPLIED THAT THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH HAS ALREADY ADVISED GALEANO NOT TO TRY FOR A FRONTAL ASSAULT ON THE "IRANIAN LEAD" AND SUPPOSED LINKS BETWEEN THE IRANIAN EMBASSY AND THE BOMBING.

-- THE LOCAL CONNECTION, A MIXTURE OF CORRUPTION AND ANTI-SEMITISM: BERAJA NOTED THAT THE ONLY PERSON DETAINED, TELLELDIN, COULD NOT HAVE RUN HIS CAR THEFT OPERATION WITHOUT THE COLLUSION OF THE NOTORIOUSLY  
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CORRUPT BUENOS AIRES PROVINCIAL POLICE. THIS PRESUMED  
LINK IS THE REASON FOR TELLELDIN'S SILENCE.

BER

AJA SAID THERE WERE OTHER UNEXPLORED  
LEADS INCLUDING A POSSIBLE CONNECTION BETWEEN A  
COMPANY THAT AMIA HAD CONTRACTED FOR DUMPSTERS (THE  
AMIA BUILDING WAS UNDERGOING RENOVATIONS) AND  
TELLELDIN. THE COMPANY IS OWNED BY

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BERAJA ALSO THOUGHT THAT

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DSCC-00 /007W  
-----E43E48 171823Z /38

R 171822Z AUG 95  
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7515

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 BUENOS AIRES 005073

E.O. 12356: DECL:08/16/05  
TAGS: PTER, PGOV, OREP, AR  
SUBJECT: STAFFDEL MACKEY VISIT: JEWISH COMMUNITY VIEWS  
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RESIDUAL ANTI-SEMITISM IN THE MID-LEVELS OF THE  
VARIOUS SECURITY FORCES HAVE HAMPERED AN EFFECTIVE

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INVESTIGATION.

-- INTER-AGENCY RIVALRIES: BERAJA NOTED THAT THE VARIOUS SECURITY FORCES -- GENDARMES, FEDERAL POLICE, PROVINCIAL POLICE -- WERE NOT ONLY NOT WORKING TOGETHER; THEY WERE DOWNRIGHT HOSTILE TO EACH OTHER, TO THE POINT OF THREATENING RIVALS WITH BODILY HARM IN BERAJA'S PRESENCE. UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES, JUDGE GALEANO HAD LITTLE AUTHORITY.

-- MOATAMER: ALTHOUGH BERAJA AGREES WITH OTHERS THAT THE IRANIAN DEFECTOR MOATAMER WAS NOT VERY CREDIBLE,  
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HE, BERAJA, THINKS THAT GALEANO SHOULD INTERROGATE HIM AGAIN. BERAJA POINTED OUT THAT LAST JULY, IN THE WAKE OF THE ATTACK, MOATAMER WAS ABLE TO IDENTIFY FOUR IRANIAN EMBASSY EMPLOYEES OUT OF A TOTAL OF 30 PHOTOS AND THUS MAY STILL HAVE USEFUL INFORMATION TO IMPART.

-- COURTS: GALEANO IS A GOOD AND HONEST JUDGE. HE KNOWS HIS REPUTATION IS ON THE LINE AND WANTS TO CRACK THE CASE. YET HE IS INEXPERIENCED IN FIGHTING TERRORISM AND REPRESENTS A HIGHLY COMPROMISED INSTITUTION. ARGENTINE EXECUTIVE BRANCH AGENCIES HAVE NOT ALWAYS EFFECTIVELY COOPERATED WITH GALEANO, AND HE KNOWS THAT IF HE STEPS ON TOO MANY EXECUTIVE BRANCH TOES PRESSURE WILL BE BROUGHT TO LIMIT HIS INVESTIGATION. BERAJA THINKS GALEANO WILL GRUDGINGLY RESPECT THESE LIMITS.

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CRUPNICOFF  
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6. AMIA PRESIDENT CRUPNICOFF AND AMIA ATTORNEY LUIS DOBNIOWSKI WERE MUCH MORE MEASURED IN THEIR INTERPRETATION OF EVENTS. UNDER THE ARGENTINE LEGAL SYSTEM, AN AGGRIEVED PARTY MAY OFFICIALLY JOIN THE PROSECUTION AND INVESTIGATION OF THE CASE. DOBNIOWSKI HAS BEEN WORKING CLOSELY WITH GALEANO AND HIS TEAM, AND BOTH HE AND CRUPNICOFF WERE HIGHLY LAUDATORY OF

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THEIR EFFORTS. THEY RECOGNIZED THE LIMITATIONS UNDER WHICH GALEANO WORKS, AND DID NOT EXPECT THE CASE TO BE QUICKLY OR EASILY SOLVED. PUBLICLY THE AMIA OFFICIALS

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ARE MAINTAINING A DISCREET, LOW PROFILE POSITION WITH REGARD TO THE STATUS OF THE INVESTIGATION. LIKE BERAJA, THEY DO SUSPECT CORRUPTION AND ANTI-SEMITISM TO BE FACTORS IN THE LACK OF PROGRESS, BUT INCOMPETENCE AND INEXPERIENCE HAVE PLAYED A BIG ROLE. FOR EXAMPLE, THEY QUESTIONED WHY AN IDENTIKIT SKETCH OF THE DRIVER OF THE VAN CARRYING THE BOMB WAS NEVER PUBLICIZED. AMIA ALSO WROTE GALEANO URGING HIM TO CONDUCT A FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW WITH MOATAMER.

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FAMILY MEMBERS  
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7. THE FAMILY MEMBERS WERE UNIFORMLY CRITICAL OF THE GOA'S PERFORMANCE. THEY PLACE CONSIDERABLE EMPHASIS ON THE CORRUPTION/ANTI-SEMITIC ELEMENTS OF THE CASE AS OUTLINED BY BERAJA. IMPUNITY, THEY BELIEVE, IS THE REASON THE INVESTIGATION APPEARS TO BE STALLED, AND BECAUSE THEIR NUMEROUS QUESTIONS REMAIN UNANSWERED, THEY BELIEVE THERE IS A CONSPIRACY OF SILENCE. THEY CONTRASTED THE WAY IN WHICH THE U.S. PUBLIC HAS BEEN KEPT INFORMED ABOUT THE OKLAHOMA CITY BOMBING INVESTIGATION TO THE TRICKLE OF INFORMATION RELATING TO THE AMIA INVESTIGATION. ON THE OTHER HAND, THEY SAY THEY HAVE NO HARD EVIDENCE FOR THEIR SUSPICIONS.

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COMMENT  
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8. IN ALL HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH HIS INTERLOCUTORS, MACKEY STRESSED THE NEED FOR PATIENCE. HE POINTED OUT THAT LUCK AND DOGGED PERSEVERANCE PLAY A BIG PART IN ANY INVESTIGATION AND CITED THE THREE-YEAR PAN AM 103 INVESTIGATION AS AN EXAMPLE OF HOW DIFFICULT AND LENGTHY SUCH CASES CAN BE.

9. NEVERTHELESS, IT APPEARS THAT BERAJA AND , TO A GREATER EXTENT, FAMILY MEMBERS HAVE EXHAUSTED THEIR PATIENCE. THEY SEEM INCREASINGLY WILLING TO HARSHLY CRITICIZE THE GOVERNMENT. A MAJOR PROBLEM IS THE FACT THAT THERE IS VERY LITTLE INFORMATION PUBLICLY AVAILABLE ON THE STATUS OF THE INVESTIGATION -- AND EVEN THAT AVAILABLE TO AMIA AND DAIA OFFICIALS IS SCANTY. THIS LACK OF SOLID NEWS HAS FUELED SUSPICIONS OF A COVER-UP. THE TRUTH MAY BE, SADLY, MORE MUNDANE: THAT GALEANO SIMPLY HAS VERY LITTLE TO SHARE. YET BECAUSE OF WHAT IS KNOWN OR SUSPECTED

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DSCC-00 /007W

-----E43E4C 171823Z /38

R 171822Z AUG 95  
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 BUENOS AIRES 005073

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TAGS: PTER, PGOV, OREP, AR  
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ABOUT TELLELDIN'S CHOP SHOP OPERATION, HIS PRESUMED  
LINKS TO THE BUENOS AIRES POLICE, AMPLE POCKETS OF  
ANTI-SEMITISM IN THE BUREAUCRACY, AND A CAUTIOUS GOA  
POLICY VIS-A-VIS IRAN, IT IS NOT DIFFICULT TO  
UNDERSTAND WHY PEOPLE HAVE GRASPED AT COVER-UPS AND  
CORRUPTION. IT IS IMPORTANT TO STRESS, HOWEVER, THAT  
EVEN THE MOST SKEPTICAL ADMIT THEY HAVE NO EVIDENCE TO  
BACK UP THEIR HYPOTHESES.

10. THESE VIEWS HAVE RECEIVED SOME, BUT NOT  
WIDESPREAD, PRESS COVERAGE HERE. IF BERAJA IS CALLED  
TO APPEAR BEFORE THE HIRC, HE WILL, IN SOME MODIFIED  
FORM, RELATE HIS THEORIES AS OUTLINED IN PARA 5. BY  
DOING SO, HE HOPES TO PRESSURE THE GOA TO DELVE MORE  
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DEEPLY INTO THESE SENSITIVE AREAS. BY HOLDING THE  
STICK OF TOUGH TESTIMONY OVER THE GOVERNMENT IN THE  
WEEKS PRIOR TO THE HEARING, HE HOPES TO EXTRACT  
COMMITMENTS FROM THE GOVERNMENT TO DEVOTE MORE ENERGY  
AND RESOURCES TO SOLVING THE CASE.  
CHEEK